



MEETING MINUTES / 21 FEBRUARY 2017

ATTENDANCE:

Present: Farley, Showell, Armbruster, Bradley, Coons, Hampton, Lardizzone, McMullen, Newman (call-in), Sarg, Seppala, and Smith **85.7%**

Absences: Baldwin, Newstadt

Guests: Paula Witcher (First State Women Warriors), Gary Morris (Military Order of the Purple Heart), John Jackson (Military Order of the Purple Heart), Jason Stewart, Dave Skocik (Friends of Delaware Veterans), Jack Tillman, Freddy Allen (VA Veterans Center), Shannon Hardester (VA Veterans Center), Patricia Chercio-Vieira

CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS:

During Moment of Silence, asked all to acknowledge Commissioner Newstadt who had a recent illness

MEETING MINUTES:

Commissioner Bradley made the motion and Commissioner Lardizzone seconded for approval

ADMINISTRATIVE REMARKS:

Wilmington VAMC – Vince Kane, Interim Associate Director for Operations

Interim Director Callahan has been in place 120 days

Still recruiting for Director and Associate Director positions

Recently 80 personnel, mostly clinical, have been hired

Still reviewing supervisory structure that will oversee five CBOCs / looking to increase specialty care at CBOCs / Sussex CBOC slated to open this spring / potential space expansion at Dover CBOC

Mentality is to focus on service improvements

Behavioral Health patients are seen within 90 days, enhancing same-day services (when needed)

The former VSO meetings will be expanded to increase community engagement

Follow-up: No information on Camp Lejeune family member victims but new VA Secretary is committed to research

(Farley) Are you working with state agencies to supplement mental health treatment?

Yes, working with state and private agencies to supplement treatment (via referrals/choice program)

(Farley) Can you take a survey to determine how many local families were impacted by Camp Lejeune findings?

Will consider crafting a survey

(Bradley) Can unregistered Veterans be screened for Hepatitis C at VA facilities?

They would need their eligibility determined, then registered for Hepatitis C screening and possibly VA care

(Bradley) What kind of services does the mobile clinic provide?

Primary care teams, identification cards, and referral services / clinic schedule is posted on website

Delaware Veterans Home (DVH) – Bill Peterson, Director:

Resident population 100 with 8 scheduled for admission

The home is facing a 10% decrease in budget

Bathing suite project is ongoing and should be complete by July

The dishwasher and adjoining wall needs to be replaced, estimated \$150K

Minor Capital Improvement funding, traditionally \$250K, may be closer to \$100K (state budget issues)

The Tele-Health project, with the Wilmington VAMC, may be running by April

Home of the Brave, Director Jessica Finan:

Residents 14 males and 3 females / low numbers due to SSVF efforts

Open House 27 April / 1100 – 1300

**Military Order of the Purple Heart presented \$1K check to home and \$247.00 toward the home's brick fundraiser

DOL – Veteran Employment and Training Service, State Director, Dave Rich,

Not present

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Shannon Hardester, Veterans Center

The Veterans Center mobile unit is available state-side offering mental health assistance for Veterans

Patricia Cerchio, First State Women's Warriors

A breakfast honoring Delaware's oldest WWII female Veteran, 12 March / 1030 at the Country House in Wilmington

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Bear Veterans Memorial Cemetery, Commissioner Armbruster:

Interments - 74

Crypt testing was successful

Millsboro Veterans Memorial Cemetery, Commissioner Bradley:

Interments - 36

Working on fountain upgrade project

Health and Human Services, Commissioner Sarg:

This position provides insight with VA and DVH

Will continue to work with Brain Injury Association of Delaware

Legislative Affairs, Commissioner McMullen

Commission presented Legislative Concerns to the Veterans Affairs Committee on 25 January

Commemorative Affairs, Commissioner Showell

Presented Organizational responsibilities for upcoming Veteran events

ORGANIZATIONAL REPORTS:

Commissioner McMullen (AFSA)

Chapter meeting was 8 February

Met Dover AFB (active duty) Command Chief on 13 February

Commissioner Armbruster (AL)

Oratorical contest first and second place winners won scholarships, first place moves on to National competition

National Commander's Delaware visit is 15 – 17 March

National Vice Commander attended DNG Change of Command

Commissioner Bradley (AMVETS)

Auxiliary presented Valentine's Day donation to Home of Brave

Chaplain provided assistance at Home of Brave

Commissioner Smith (DELVETS)
Hosted Super Bowl social at Delaware Veterans Home

Commissioner Lardizzzone (DAV)
Attended Delaware Veterans Home admissions meeting
National is meeting on Capitol Hill on 28 February
Story board highlighting Black WWI participants will be next to WWI monument unveiling

Commissioner Coons (KWVA)
Not present

Commissioner Farley (MCL)
Toys for Tots supported 1200 families

Chairman Sarg (MOAA)
Health care will be reviewed on Capitol Hill, proposed cuts should not adversely impact Service Members
Base Realignment and Closing committee may resurface as previous closings have not had proposed financial benefit
VA My Choice Program needs to be re-approved
Dover AFB is having an employment transition summit, 15 – 17 March
The Green Turtle is the site of the annual scholarship drive on 22 February, 20% of meal costs goes toward the drive

Awaiting Appointment (MOPH)
Nothing to report

Commissioner Seppala (MOWW)
Organizational meeting, 14 February, featured Director Kirby and Commissioner Sarg
National Convention, 1 – 6 August, Billings MT

Commissioner Newman (VFW)
Voice of Democracy winners to be announced on 25 February
Legislative conference, on Capitol Hill, is scheduled for 26 February – 1 March (reviewing VFW goals)

Commissioner Baldwin (VVA)
(Skocik) Vietnam Veterans Day event, Kent County Park, Gen Timmons speaker

Commissioner Newstadt (At Large)
Not present

Commissioner Showell (At Large)
Transition with Gen Timmons involves multiple legislative actions
Prayer Breakfast, 28 February, Cavalier Club
Pennsylvania Veteran Affairs member is interested in attending our meeting

Commissioner Hampton (At Large)
Has reapplied for appointment and hopes to continue serving on the Commission

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS:

DVTF: Requests 11, Granted 9 (81.8%), Awarded \$8483.89 and Balance \$39,160.00
Customer service surveys are being finalized

TERM EXPIRATION:

Hampton 22 February 2017

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Committee Positions (CLOSED)

- Commissioner committee (Cemetery, Health/Human Services, Legislative, Commemorative) names were submitted to Vice Chair Showell

World War I Memorial (OPEN)

- Scheduled for 27 April / 1430 at Legislative Hall

April Meeting with Lt Gen Timmons (OPEN)

- The Commission is scheduled to hold the May meeting at the DNG

NEW BUSINESS:

Nothing was recommended

ITEMS FOR THE GOOD AND WELFARE OF THE ORGANIZATION:

Director Kirby reminded Commissioners of the professional courtesy of silencing cell phones during the meeting

My VA Communities Delaware meets 22 February / 1400 at Wilmington VAMC

AMVETS proposed having August meeting at their Sussex post

SPECIAL SESSION:

None

NEXT MEETING:

Tuesday, 21 March 2017 at 10:00 AM

LOCATION:

Delaware Commission of Veterans Affairs